

SPEECH 5

OF

HENRY I. SEAMAN, OF NEW YORK,

ON

THE TARIFF.

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S P E E C H .

The bill reported by the Committee of Ways and Means, proposing to reduce the duties on imports, being under consideration in Committee of the Whole on the State of the Union—

Mr. SEAMAN addressed the committee as follows:

Mr. CHAIRMAN, if I consulted my own feelings, I should not have trespassed at all upon the time of the committee by taking part in the debate upon the bill now under consideration. But I have a constituency deeply interested in this question, and I cannot consent to record my vote without first assigning the reasons which govern it. I should not dare to return to my constituents without first raising my feeble voice in defence of a system which I honestly believe is guarding their best interest.

It is not my design, sir, to enter upon the discussion of this question in a captious or partisan spirit. I regard it as a great American question, involving common rights and common interests. In the remarks which I will venture to make, I shall not be governed by the theory of any man, or yield to any party dogma. I am not bound by any. I will endeavor to take a common-sense view of the question, and will bring to my aid the experience of over twenty years of active commercial pursuits, and the experience of men now engaged in the foreign commerce of the country.

Some seven months of the session are now gone, and we are just entering upon some of the most important measures. We are to be kept from our homes to legislate “under the burning rays of a midsummer’s sun.” The eyes of our constituents are fixed upon us. From the centre of this Union to its remote border an intense interest is felt in our action.

I object to the bill and the amendment now before the committee on various grounds, but mainly that it is an entire abandonment of the protective policy. It proposes a system of *ad valorem* duties in the place of *specific* duties, and is not, what it purports to be, a tariff for revenue.

It is not my purpose, sir, to travel far back and trace out the several revenue laws, and their effects upon the country. The tariff acts of 1816, 1824, 1828, and 1832, and the influence they exerted upon the commerce, agriculture, and manufactures of the country, are matters of history. They are

part of the annals of our day and generation, and their monitory voice bids us beware of the errors of some, and to profit by the wise provisions of others.

Let us take a glance, Mr. Chairman, at the condition of the country during the few years which preceded the passage of the tariff act of 1842. And what was its condition? Commerce almost destroyed, our ships lying at our wharves without employment, our manufacturing interests prostrated, and our agricultural productions worth little or nothing; no market, either at home or abroad; the labor of the country fast running down to a level with the pauper labor of Europe; in short, ruin seemed to have fixed its iron grasp upon the energies of the country. The country was largely in debt, and the Government was forced to the necessity of borrowing many millions of dollars. The large surplus in the Treasury when Mr. Van Buren came into power was "used up." The duties on imports had been undergoing a slow but gradual reduction, and with it the revenue of the country was diminishing with increased momentum. In short, the country was in a sad condition. I point to the record to prove it.

What, sir, is the state of things with us now? Look around us. Whence comes all this prosperity? The country teeming with wealth; commerce, manufactures, and agriculture, all prosperous, and each contributing its quota to the national good; labor receiving high wages. Whence comes all this? It is not caused by an unusual demand from abroad for our productions; not by an inflated paper currency, inflating prices, which our friends on the other side of the house talk so much about; no, sir, it is caused by the blessed influences of the protective policy, fostering and protecting the industry of our people. Will you disturb this state of things? Will you experiment upon a nation's prosperity? It is an old maxim (and all common sayings are founded in experience and truth) to leave good enough alone. The thing works well, and my vote shall not be given to disturb it.

The gentleman from Georgia (Mr. Jones) told us that he would judge the tree by its fruit; so will I. The tree planted in 1842 by a wise Congress has been a most prolific bearer. It has yielded abundant fruit. Then do not let us cut it down. If I mistake not, it has struck its roots deep into the hearts of the American people, and we be to that man who lays an axe at its root.

The question is often asked of myself and my honored colleagues, how it is that we, who represent the greatest commercial interests of the country, are found among the supporters of the protective policy? Why, sir, go to

those merchants whose ships whiten every sea, and ask them what they have to say in relation to this question. Have they asked you to change this policy—to repeal the tariff? No, sir; they are intelligent men, of practical knowledge, worth more in deciding this question than volumes of such fine-spun theory as the Secretary of the Treasury has given. They know well that the sun never yet shone upon a people who became distinguished for their commerce, that did not protect and foster their home industry.

Cast your eye, sir, over the civilized world, “and, without a solitary exception, you will find those nations whose industry is protected and nourished occupying an elevated position, and exercising a controlling influence over neighboring nations;” and, on the other hand, in those countries where their peculiar institutions operate to paralyze industry, you will find the people in a miserable and abject state, without commerce and without any of the constituents of national wealth.

The merchants I have the honor to represent understand this matter, sir. If it is for them you are legislating, wait until they ask you to do it. Bring the war with Mexico, in which we are now unfortunately and unnecessarily engaged, to a speedy termination, and preserve our present amicable relations with other countries, and the commerce of the country, so far as our present action is concerned, can take care of itself.

It is said that the protective duties cheapen prices. Why, sir, it requires no argument to demonstrate this. We may reason about the matter, but the fact remains uncontradicted, that the imposition of protective duties is invariably followed by reduced prices of the articles protected, whether it be the coal and iron dug from the bowels of the earth, or the productions of the loom, or any other branch of manufactures. With these lights before us, Mr. Chairman, for one, I am not disposed to grope in the dark mazes of theory. I know that the doctrine is ridiculed; but what are the facts? The first package of domestic calicoes I ever saw for sale in the city of New York was in the year 1824: it was a common blue print, and was sold for something like thirty cents per yard; and at the same time a better article in every respect (except in the thickness of the cloth) could be purchased of English manufacture at less price. Now, sir, you can buy an article of our own manufacture, superior in every respect, for twelve and a half cents per yard. It is a little singular, but I recollect it very well, that my friend and colleague, (Mr. HUNGERFORD,) who introduced the amendment now before the committee, purchased some of these very goods; and I would have listened to him with great pleasure, when he took the floor, if he had

told us what produced this great diminution in price. I claim it to be home competition, induced and fostered by protection.

I will take another article, sir—that of Kentucky jeans—which enters largely into the consumption of the country. What has been the effect of protection upon that article? In 1834 they were worth one dollar per yard; in 1836, eighty cents per yard; in 1838 and 1839, sixty-five cents per yard. A better article was exhibited at the Fair in this city at thirty-seven and a half cents per yard. I could go on and enumerate a variety of other articles, the manufacturing of which has been commenced in this country within the last twenty years; but I refer to these as illustrative of all the other varieties.

I take now another branch of our manufactures, and one which is becoming of very great importance to us. I allude to flint glass. Sir, no one could have visited the Fair without being struck with the richness and variety of the specimens there exhibited. I hold in my hand a memorial of five hundred operatives in flint glass, praying Congress that the duty imposed on flint glass by the tariff of 1842 may remain unaltered, or if altered, to be specific.

When the tariff went into operation in 1842, we had only four of these establishments in all the country. They were just gasping for breath, borne down by foreign competition. The country was flooded with an indifferent article of German, French, and English manufacture. Another year and not one of these establishments would have been left in the country. Now, sir, what is their condition, under the fostering influences of this much abused and misunderstood protection? Why, they have increased fivefold in different parts of the country, producing annually six millions of dollars, employing over six thousand persons; their wages one-third higher than in 1842; and furnishing all the varieties of the article, from the commonest tumbler to the richest cut glass, at thirty per cent. less than they could be purchased in 1840 and 1841, consuming three-fourths of all the Missouri lead and thousands of pounds of potash. Every article used in the manufacturing of glass is of American production.

There is one other branch of manufactures to which I wish to revert, and it is one but little known, although no one could have visited the Fair without noticing the beautiful specimens there exhibited. The article I allude to is the manufacturing of ostrich feathers into brushes. It is only some ten years since this article was first introduced into this country, and we are indebted to the “mechanical contrivance” of an American citizen for the perfection which the manufacture of this article has reached.

The feather of which these brushes are made is not the feather of the African ostrich, which is an article of ornament, but of the South American bird, and which is used only for the manufacture of brushes and articles of that kind. If the bill before us becomes a law, it will impose the same duty on the feather as on the brush, and the American article will be driven out of market. The *Gazette and Times*, published in the city of New York, has been sent to me, and it contains an article on the manufacture of these brushes. I will send it to the clerk's table that he may read a part of it:

"Whatever praise may have heretofore been awarded to *American* ingenuity and enterprise, those are now completely obscured by foreign skill and pertinacity; at least such would be the natural supposition, judging from the conduct of some of our legislators at Washington. Foreign merchandise and foreign agents have had for some time free ingress to the rooms of the Committee of Ways and Means, while *American* manufacturers and *American* products have been as carefully excluded. The desire would seem to be to care for and protect foreign interests rather than those of our own country. The imported feather brush is a very bungling, unsubstantial, and comparatively useless affair, and, being unsaleable, does not enter at all into competition with the *American* article. The duty on the raw material, therefore, is, in effect, so much *tar* on Mr. Steele's manufacture, and, consequently, on all its consumers; and it is the more unjust, because it does not discriminate between the African ostrich feather, which is an article of luxury—and very few of which are used in the manufacture of the brush—and the greatly more common, durable, and cheaper feather of the ostrich of the Southern continent, which forms the principal staple of Mr. Steele's business.

"In order to set this in the strongest light before the Committee of Ways and Means, Mr. S. made a visit, some weeks since, to Washington, with a view of exhibiting to them some specimens of his work, that the differences in the material and the unjust operation of the duty might at once become visible to the eye as well as to the understanding. He was, however, rudely repulsed by the chairman of the committee, who would not deign to look at these specimens of *American* industry and skill, nor hear a word of personal explanation in relation to them; and this, too, as before stated, while the agents of *foreign* manufacturers were allowed to exhibit their wares in any quantity, and to tell such stories as might advance the interests they represented.

"But the case of Mr. Steele is by no means a singular one. Hundreds of similar instances have occurred since the commencement of the present session of Congress."

Of course, Mr. Chairman, I cannot vouch for the correctness of the article which has just been read. Mr. Steele is a gentleman of veracity, and entitled to the respect of every member of this House. I will only add, sir, that it agrees, substantially, with what Mr. Steele told me before he left this city.

I will revert to one other branch, and by no means an unimportant one. I allude to hatters' furs when on the skin. Under the tariff of 1842 they are admitted at a duty of five per cent., and the manufactured article is protected by a duty of 25 per cent. The bill before us proposes to equalize the

duty at 10 per cent., thereby removing all protection to the manufactured article. The effect upon this branch of our manufactures cannot but be disastrous.

Mr. Chairman, I have said that I would bring to my aid, in the discussion of this question, the experience of merchants now engaged in the foreign commerce of the country. I have had personal interviews with many gentlemen engaged in the importation of goods of all kinds, and from all countries; and, sir, I find but one opinion in relation to the bill before the committee; it is condemned by all of them. Even those who do not oppose a modification of the act of 1842, are opposed to any increase of duty upon the raw material used by our manufacturers, and to the system of ad valorem duties, which the bill now before us proposes to establish.

I have before me, Mr. Chairman, a large number of letters from gentlemen engaged in commerce, containing information on the different branches of manufactures, as connected with the commerce of the country. I could make valuable extracts from all of them, but it would be consuming more of my time than I am disposed to devote to them. But, sir, some of these letters contain information so important to us, at the present moment, I will ask the attention of the committee to some few extracts from them.

I do indeed wish, sir, that the Secretary of the Treasury had had a few of them before him when he compiled the "valuable document" he has published to the world. I must take this occasion to say that, in my opinion, and I believe it is the opinion of most practical men, that there never issued from the press in this country a work so full of error, more puerile or fallacious; and, sir, I am astonished that it should have emanated from such a high quarter. Why, Mr. Chairman, a second-rate Pearl street clerk can point out its fallacies.

I have here an exceedingly well written letter from an importer of French and Italian goods in the city of New York. I will read a paragraph from it. The writer says that in early life he "became a convert to free trade, but more mature reflection, aided by observation and experience of the progress of affairs in our country, brought me to the conclusion that, though free trade is beautiful in theory, the protective policy is the true one to develop the resources and prosperity of the country; and this has been my opinion for the last *ten or fifteen years*, during which period I have been engaged in the importing business, and have had no interest in any manufacturing establishment or product. My belief is, that a large majority of *importing merchants* in this city prefer to have the tariff remain as it is, rather

than have it much reduced, especially if the specific principle is to be abandoned."

The writer then goes on, and says that a reduction of the duties would cause a large increase of imports. Our markets would be overstocked, and the business of the country would be disturbed by an export of specie. It may be said that our exports will increase in proportion. Here is the mistake. Europe will only take of our productions what they need, and that without any reference to our tariff. If the supply is excessive, prices go down. Would it then be to the interest of the farmers, think you, sir, to have the prices of their produce fixed by the export rates? Will it not be better for them to have the various branches of our manufactures protected and flourishing at home, and thus give them a market for their bread-stuffs and provisions? Certainly, sir, the home market is the best for the farmer. If we look to foreign countries to consume our agricultural productions, they can only be sent there when prices are low at home, and the comparatively small amount which is sent abroad will, in a great measure, determine the prices of the immense amount consumed at home.

Mr. Chairman, a few days since I received a communication from an intelligent merchant in the city of New York, inviting my attention to the carpeting manufactured annually in the United States. I had no conception of the extent of this manufacture. There are some interesting facts connected with it, to which I would call the attention of the committee. The estimated number of yards of carpeting now manufactured per annum in the United States is 10,580,085. The value of this is \$6,583,890. Wages paid per annum, \$3,174,257. Consumption of South American and Smyrna wool per annum, 24,687,631 pounds; equal to full cargoes for eighty to one hundred vessels. The freight and primage, at $1\frac{1}{4}$ cent per pound, is \$524,025 14. The number of persons employed or dependant upon this branch of manufactures is 35,000. The number of small manufactories, with not more than two to ten looms each, 250. Should Congress alter the existing tariff, it is all important to the carpet manufacturers to have the duty specific; indeed, it is quite as much so as to the growers of sugar and manufacturers of iron.

The amendment offered by my colleague will break up, root and branch, every manufactory of carpets in the United States. He proposes to reduce the duty one-half on the manufactured article, and to increase the duty twenty-five per cent. upon the raw material. Why, sir, this is an alarming feature in the bill. Is this Congress ready to cast upon the wide world thir-

ty-five thousand persons, whose united wages amount to near three millions and a quarter annually, and many of these persons with families dependant upon them? And, Mr. Chairman, when you shall have done this, you will only have touched a very small fraction of the manufacturing interests of the country.

I have also before me a letter from a highly respectable constituent, calling my attention to another important branch of our manufactures; and one, sir, the importance of which is but little understood. I refer to articles made of bone, horn and horn tips, tortoise shell, mother of pearl, ivory, and the different varieties of fancy wood. Very few of these articles are produced in this country, and of those produced here the quantity falls greatly below the consumption. The bill before us discriminates between the raw material and the manufactured article. But, sir, the duty on the first is too high, and too low on the latter. The effect of this will be to give the foreign market to the manufacturers of other countries, who receive the raw material free of duty.

Allow these articles to come to us free of duty, as the most of them now do, and you enable us to give employment to many thousands of our people, and to compete with the manufacturers of other countries all over the world. Why, sir, this House is not aware, and the country is not aware, of the growing importance of this trade. Large amounts are annually exported to Mexico, South America, and the more distant regions of the globe. The effect of the bill before us could not have been understood by my colleague; should it become a law, it will break up a valuable branch of our industry, and which has been many years growing into importance.

I have, sir, a letter from one of the largest importers in the city of New York, in which he says, "that nine-tenths of the American importers are in favor of specific duties—they are a great protection against frauds. To honest importers it is not so material what the duties are, provided they are collected of all alike; that under an ad valorem system I see not but that honest men must give up the business; they cannot contend with the frauds which will be practised." The writer then describes a case wherein an attempt was made to defraud the revenue, during the past winter, of eighteen thousand francs in one invoice. Such facts as these are worthy of consideration, and should lead us to be cautious in our legislation.

I will ask the attention of the committee to one more of these letters, and will pass by the others, although I am confident, Mr. Chairman, that the information they contain is valuable. The writer says :

“ The most important change which is proposed, is the *ad valorem* duties on silks, instead of specific. *This by all means should be opposed*, as *ad valorem* duties would *again encourage frauds* in the shape of undervaluations, and which I would defy the Government to prevent. Since we have had the specific system, the value of goods is more uniform, and the most beneficial results have followed.”

This, sir, is the opinion of one of the largest importers of silks in the United States ; the senior member of the firm is a French gentleman of the first respectability.

“ The establishment of manufactures in a country possessing the natural advantages essential to success, tends directly to stimulate industry of the most useful, as well as the most productive kind. Science is encouraged to lend its aid to the arts ; improvements in machinery tends to abridge labor, and reduce the cost of production.”

I noticed in a late number of the Union, published in this city, an article taken from the London Standard, in which it is admitted that “ nearly all the recent mechanical contrivances introduced into factories are of Yankee invention.” This, sir, is certainly true ; and what was it that stimulated the ingenuity of the American people, but the protection afforded against competition from other countries. The nations of the Old World had the start of us in time ; they possessed unlimited capital, and had the markets of the whole world, including our own, at their command. The protective policy, so wisely adopted by us, invited capital into this department of our industry, and the “ *mechanical contrivances*,” diminishing the cost of production, is the cause of the diminished price of all protected articles ; and it is this, sir, which enables the “ *poor man*” to clothe himself and family so cheaply.

Mr. Chairman, we have heard much during the present Congress about the *mechanics* and the *laboring poor* ; and it is this meritorious class of our citizens that Mr. Secretary Walker would induce to believe he has taken under his fatherly care, and one of the allegations he makes against the existing tariff is, that it “ discriminates in favor of the manufacturer and against the mechanic, by higher duties upon the manufacture than upon the article made out of it by the mechanic.” Why, sir, any school boy can turn to the tariff of 1842, and convict the Secretary of downright misrepresentation ; and I am satisfied the allegation was made more for the purpose of controlling the vote of the mechanic, than a desire to contribute to his happiness or prosperity.

What are the facts, Mr. Chairman, in regard to the protection afforded to our mechanics by the present tariff? Why, sir, they are abundantly protected in every article they make, and they have too much intelligence not to understand this. They have the whole of our markets to themselves, and are entirely protected against foreign competition. But, sir, when you shall have passed the bill now before the committee, and its effects upon the mechanic and laborer of the country shall have been realized, then, sir, they will have learned by dear bought experience which afforded them the protection they most needed—the tariff of 1842, or Mr. Walker's policy.

I am well satisfied, sir, that the more you protect and develop the home industry of the country the more you contribute to the wealth and happiness of the people. A few days since I met with an address delivered at Columbia, South Carolina, on the 26th November, 1840, by a distinguished member of the other end of the Capitol, (Senator McDUFFIE,) in which I find a passage so much to my purpose I will read it. He says :

“The greatest, most prevailing, and most pernicious of all the practices which distinguish and deform the agriculture of this and the other cotton-planting States is the almost exclusive direction of the whole available labor of the plantation to the production of our greatest market staple, and the consequent neglect of all the other commodities which the soil is capable of producing or sustaining, and which are essential to supply the wants of the establishment. No scheme of reform or improvement can produce any great and salutary result which does not lay the axe at the root of this radical vice in our husbandry. If I could now reveal a process (he continues) by which our common soil could be made to produce two bales of cotton to the acre, I should have great doubt whether the revelation would be a blessing or a curse to that great interest.”

He then urges upon the planters of the South to raise their own corn, pork, bacon, horses, mules, &c., and, from his own experience, tells them how it can be done.

Why, Mr. Chairman, this is orthodox, and is just the doctrine we subscribe to, and goes as far in support of home industry as I could wish any man to go. Should the bill now before us ever reach the Senate, I hope the distinguished Senator will urge the people of his State to use their water power and labor in manufacturing their own cotton. Sir, when that day comes, and come it will, we shall hear less of this clamor against protection. The “lords of the spindle and the loom” will have found a home, yes, and a safe one too, in South Carolina. I am informed that already some few cotton factories are in operation in the State, and that others are about to be erected. The attention of the people is now being directed to the subject. I have heard the prediction uttered, and I believe in the sound-

ness of it, that the day was not far distant when she would return to her first love, (in favor of protection,) and become a manufacturing State: The recommendation of her distinguished statesman has not been unheeded, and the axe will be laid at the "radical vice in her husbandry;" then the "curse" will be removed, and the "blessing" realized.

I object to the bill and the amendment on the ground that it proposes a system of ad valorem in the place of specific duties. I know, sir, it is contended by some that ad valorem duties are the most just. In theory it would seem so; but experience is the best teacher, and it is found that this system leads to the most dangerous results. I have had some experience in this matter, and I know the danger of the system. I believe, sir, that on the whole continent of Europe specific duties prevail to the almost entire exclusion of ad valorem. In the tariff of Sir Robert Peel, of seven hundred and fourteen enumerated articles, six hundred and eight are specific, and only one hundred and six ad valorem.

The opinions of all practical men, familiar with the subject, are in favor of specific duties whenever it is practicable. Ad valorems lead to great uncertainty in your revenue. Prices at home and abroad are continually changing. The quantity consumed varies but little from year to year. Make your duties specific, and you have no difficulty in estimating your probable revenue.

Gentlemen object, sir, to specific duties, on the ground that they impose the same duty on the poorer article as on the good, and thus throw the heaviest tax upon the working classes. Even if this was true, the tendency of the system would work in favor of the poorer classes, as it would exclude inferior qualities, and reduce, by competition, the value of the better qualities, which are always cheapest in the end.

Mr. Chairman, let this Congress repeal the present tariff, and establish a system of ad valorem duties by the passage of this bill, and, my word for it, sir, the country will be flooded with European fabrics—the rejected patterns "and spurious imitations, with false fugitives colors, will be thrown into our markets in quantities to break down the most skilful manufacturer"—especially during a period of depression in the markets of Europe—and the country will be drained of her coin to pay for that which she does not want. But this is not all: you strike a death blow at the mechanics of the country; you take from them the protection that they now have; you reduce the duty on the articles they manufacture; and you greatly increase the duty on almost every thing they use in manufacturing them. Sir, the tanner, hatter,

tailor, shoemaker, blacksmith, and all other mechanics, will find themselves undersold by articles of foreign production. I fear it will shut up the iron and coal mines of Pennsylvania, and the salt works of my own State. The tanners and glass works cannot be sustained against the foreign competition which will pour in upon them. We now import hides at a duty of five per cent., and, when made into leather, export it to a considerable extent; but make the duty the same on the hides and leather, (or a difference of only 10 per cent.,) and the tanners will stop their works; they cannot derive any profit from them, and we will become importers of leather instead of shippers.

Gentlemen are anticipating great advantages to our commerce and agriculture from the repeal of the corn laws and opening of the ports of England. Well, sir, I trust it may all be realized. I am glad the ports are opened, and I have no doubt the enterprise of our merchants will make the most out of it which our peculiar situation will allow. But we must not forget that we are to have competitors for this trade, and from regions of the world possessing great advantages, where bread-stuffs are produced in great abundance, and where the wages of labor are comparatively nothing. The wheat of the Baltic and the Mediterranean can be carried to England cheaper than we can carry it from our Western States. I am told by a merchant engaged in the purchase and shipment of flour, (and the fact has also been stated in the newspapers,) that wheat has been landed in England, (I think at Bristol,) from either Moldavia or Wallachia, which cost only 28 cents per bushel in that country. I do not know what the freights are worth, but I suppose 15 cents the bushel will land it in any part of England. Sir, I have no doubt this statement is correct.

Mr. Chairman, I was very much struck by the remarks of the honorable gentleman from Vermont (Mr. COLLAMER) in relation to beef. Mexico and the whole continent of South America abounds with beef cattle; and large quantities of beef will find its way to England from those countries. It cost nothing to produce it. Cattle are only valued for their skins, tallow, and horns. But, when a market is opened for the beef, it will be furnished to any extent, and at prices cheaper than from any part of the world.

If wheat can be landed in England at the price I have named, and should the beef of South America and Mexico find its way to her markets, how are we to be benefited by the repeal of the corn laws? If it is to be of benefit to us, is it not time, sir, that we began to realize something from it? It is known that there was a short crop in England last year, and that she has

had to look to other countries for a supply of some of the necessities of life. But, sir, I have not heard of any large shipment of flour or provisions. Prices are now low in this country, and if it is not safe to make shipments now, I ask gentlemen to tell me when it will be.

Mr. Chairman, I am satisfied that at this very moment we are testing the effect upon our markets of the repeal of the corn laws, and that if we do not derive advantages from it now we never will, except when the crops in England are cut off. I regard this measure as a masterly stroke of British policy, and developing that principle of protection which has always distinguished her as a nation. Sir Robert Peel knew perfectly well, that by furnishing necessary food at the lowest possible rate, he was just as effectually protecting the manufacturing interests of the country, as he was by keeping the duty off of the raw materials; for the food which the manufacturer consumes enters just as much into the cost of the article he manufactures as does the raw material which he makes use of in manufacturing them.

I have said that England has adopted a system of specific duties. Although I am not disposed to adopt her whole commercial policy, in this she has shown her wisdom. "Why was this done by so wise, experienced, and cautious a nation? (I use the language of a distinguished citizen of my own State, Mr. Filmore.) Because, in imposing an ad valorem duty, regard is always had to the cost of the article abroad, and not where the duty is paid. It may be asked why is this? Why not calculate the duty on the value of the article whence imported? Because it is found impracticable. There are different qualities of the same article, and men's opinions as to these qualities are always found to differ. Hence ad valorem duties cannot be made uniform. Thus, a gallon of wine imported into New York may there have one value; a gallon of the same article imported into Charleston or New Orleans may have there a higher or a lower value. It is a matter of opinion; and, if the duties are to be levied on the home valuation, as it is called, the duties will not be uniform."

Objections are also made to the principle of minimums. Why, are gentlemen from the South, who oppose minimum duties, aware that the minimum of six and a quarter cents the square yard on cottons was introduced in 1816 by Mr. Lowndes, of South Carolina, and carried by the vote of that State? But I will not remind that noble State of her *backslidings*; as I have already said, she will soon become a manufacturing State, and will again stand where she did in 1816—in favor of protection.

Mr. Chairman, it is for the farmer also that I would advocate protection

to our labor; because, sir, I believe it will give him a home market for his produce—the only market upon which he can rely. I have already shown how he is to be affected by looking to a foreign market to fix the price for his productions. If you throw out of employ the mechanic and the manufacturer, and convert them into farmers, you increase the production of the soil, and diminish the consumption. If you do this, does it not follow, as a necessary consequence, that the farming interest is to be injuriously affected?

But, sir, I will not pursue this subject further. I could go on and give other reasons than those which I have already assigned, why my vote will be recorded against the measure before us. Sir, I have an abiding confidence in the “sober second thought of the people,” and I appeal to them—to the farmer, mechanic, and the laborer of the country, if they are willing to have the wages of labor brought down to a level with the labor of Europe—*ten pence a day and meat once a week?*

In conclusion, I would urge upon the majority of this Congress to ponder in their course—the people will hold them to a strict account. It is my firm conviction that the measures proposed are at war with the best interest of the country, and retribution will sooner or later fall upon those who carry them out. When I look, sir, at the present prosperous condition of the country, blessed by a beneficent Providence beyond all the other nations of the earth, I tremble at the thought lest “we might be found fighting against Him.”

